

**SP-R14 Assess Regional Recreation and Barriers to Recreation***October 25, 2002***1.0 Introduction/Background**

Recreation-related expenditures can make significant economic contributions to communities such as Oroville. Understanding and removing potential barriers to recreational use can help local entities increase visitors' recreation-related expenditures. Barriers may include the following: visitors' lack of awareness of what an area has to offer; perceived or actual access difficulties; poor evaluations of the area's attractiveness; and visitors' dissatisfaction with poor experiences during previous visits to an area.

When making decisions about where to recreate, visitors often evaluate alternate locations within a geographic region. Therefore, understanding recreation supply and demand issues in a regional context is a critical part of identifying and removing barriers to increased recreational use. This study will examine such barriers within the Study Area, and will provide an assessment of regional recreational opportunities.

**2.0 Study Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to determine barriers to increasing existing and future recreational uses within the Study Area, including an evaluation of regional recreational opportunities in northern California.

**3.0 Relationship to Relicensing/Need for the Study**

This study is needed to meet the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC's) direction for preparing recreation exhibits. Specifically, FERC guidelines indicate that the licensee should cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies in planning for recreational use of public lands administered by those agencies adjacent to the Study Area. This requires a regional approach to assessing recreational needs. FERC also requires licensees to develop suitable public recreational facilities with adequate public access. This is best accomplished by evaluating recreation demand in a regional context.

The most recent major study conducted for the Study Area was the 1996 visitor questionnaire conducted by Guthrie et al. (1997). It examined existing recreation use levels and asked visitors entering controlled access areas to complete a brief survey. This survey asked about: specific activities visitors undertook; lengths of stays; daily expenditures; visitors' residential locations; and their overall level of satisfaction. The study questionnaire did not contain specific questions about what types of features would motivate visitors to recreate at the Study Area more often. The California Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR's) 1997 Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California study also is relevant to this effort in that a substantial portion of it focuses on un-met demand for a variety of recreation activities—this information is reported by county.

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This study addresses Issue Statement R1—adequacy of recreation facilities, opportunities, and access to accommodate current use and future demand. It specifically addresses Issues RE 1, 2, 5-17, 19-39, 55, 56, 60, 64-83, 95, 96, 104, 105, 118-130, 132-145, 147, 150, and 151.

Another relevant study is DPR's current study, which will query visitors at a variety of state parks and state recreation areas. However, the information to be collected is fairly broad and will be more useful for state-level strategic planning, than for assessing preferences about specific management problems or development scenarios for the Study Area.

California Department of Boating and Waterways' (DBW's) study on the Delta and San Joaquin River is another resource that addressed issues similar to those to be included in this study. DBW's study will be acquired and reviewed for pertinent information and solutions.

## **4.0 Study Area**

The Study Area includes the facilities and areas within and adjacent to (1/4 mile) the FERC project boundary, adjacent lands, facilities, and areas with a clear project nexus, and a larger region that will include potential visitors' area of origin. The larger region will include the following:

- Butte County
- Neighboring counties (Yuba, Sutter)
- San Francisco Bay Area (region defined by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG))
- Sacramento area
- Other areas in northern California and northern Nevada yet to be determined

Specific areas and facilities where questionnaires will be given to visitors are discussed in SP-R13—Recreation Surveys.

## **5.0 General Approach**

### **Task 1—Review Demand and Supply Information for Study Area**

The research team will review all the data sources contained in Attachment A and consult with local experts to identify previous and current supply and demand levels for the Study Area, and for other similar recreation sites. An outcome of this task will be a list of barriers to increasing Project-related recreation. This list will help the research team develop questions for the regional recreation questionnaire. This information will help the team understand the factors that may constrain or facilitate recreational demands in the Study Area. Some of this information is specific to the Lake Oroville area, while other sources are regionally focused. Focus groups led by local recreation experts will also be used to identify barriers. These sources of information will be used to help develop barrier-related questions for the questionnaires that will be administered as part of SP-R13.

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Task 1 will include a literature review targeting typical barriers to reservoir recreation. An example of pertinent literature to be reviewed is *A Study of Boater Recreation on Lake Berryessa, California* (Jackson et al. 1988). The study describes barriers to reservoir recreation according to specific boater groups, reservoir condition preferences, beneficial and detrimental existing developments, and increasing public access. Similar studies will be acquired and reviewed for insight into typical barriers to reservoir recreation.

### Task 2—Collect Barrier-Related Information

Information on barriers to increased recreational use will come from responses to questionnaires administered as part of SP-R13. This study plan describes the different target groups that will receive questionnaires, and the general topics to be addressed in each questionnaire. To identify potential barriers, these groups will be asked a common set of questions regarding their levels of experience with visiting the Study Area and reasons for visiting, or as appropriate, reasons for not visiting. A common set of questions concerning interest in attending special events and programs will also be asked.

Another means of identifying barriers will be interview visitors to similar recreation sites. These individuals will evaluate their experiences against visits to other sites, and if applicable, compare those experiences with any visits to the Study Area.

To implement the similar sites questionnaire, the research team will select three similar sites (i.e., reservoirs in the Central Valley); one that is as similar as possible to the Study Area, one that is much less developed, and one that has more infrastructure than the Study Area. Candidate sites include Folsom Lake or Shasta Lake (highly developed), Clear Lake or Lake Berryessa (comparable level of development to Lake Oroville State Recreation Area (LOSRA)), and Black Butte Lake or East Park Reservoir (low development). The precise reservoirs for comparison will be determined. A detailed implementation schedule is found in Attachment B.

### Task 3—Analyze Barrier Results from Other Questionnaires

Information from the recreation visitor, household, and similar recreation sites questionnaires will be analyzed. Responses to questions from some of the other target groups (e.g. business owners) may also be analyzed. The team will identify and rank reasons for visiting and not visiting the Study Area. Additionally, the team will rank the attractiveness of the Study Area relative to the other three similar recreation sites.

The research team will segment respondents from the various target groups in terms of their likelihood of visiting the Study Area, and the barriers that are most constraining.

Segments might include:

- Those who already have another preferred water-based recreation site, and are not interested in visiting the Study Area (due to climate, setting, etc.);
- Those who don't spend much time or money on recreation at the Study Area, but could be induced to spend more through special events;
- Those who don't know about all the opportunities at the Study Area, but could be induced to visit on a trial basis through improved marketing efforts;
- Those who would be interested in going to the Study Area if a particular type of facility (more large group campsites, more fish cleaning areas) were provided;

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- Those who would be interested in going to the Study Area if conditions were more favorable for recreational activities (water levels, access, etc.); and/or
  - Those who are “heavy users” of the Study Area and could be induced to visit more and spend more money with minor improvements.

#### Task 4—Collect Regional Supply Information

To the extent possible, supply information will be collected for sites representative of the Oroville recreation area. The Oroville market area will be defined by examining previous visitor surveys for the Study Area. This supply information will be collected via interviews with park/resource area managers. Each of these managers will be asked to provide information regarding the extent of current facilities, the level of utilization of these facilities, and the recreational opportunities that can be pursued in their area. Anecdotal information will also be obtained from these entities regarding the perceived adequacy of facilities to meet potential increases in visitation.

#### Task 5—Collect Regional Demand Information

Data from the 1997 DPR survey will be used to estimate demand for water-based activities, as well as hiking, walking, and other types of trail use. Using models developed for SP-R12—Projected Recreation Use, the team will project 1997 use to the current year (assumed to be 2002) for the previously mentioned types of activities.

#### Task 6—Analyze Regional Supply and Demand

In this task, the research team will analyze the data collected in Tasks 4 and 5. The research team will identify gaps between the current and projected supply of facilities at similar recreation sites, and the current and projected demand. The output will be a table comparing types and amounts of recreation facilities at the Study Area and other recreation sites representative of Lake Oroville’s recreation market area, as well as the gaps indicative of unmet demand for the market area.. To address the potential barrier pertaining to a lack of recreation facilities and programs, the team will identify gaps in recreation programs and facilities to address un-met demand for water, water-related and trail-related activities in the Lake Oroville market area.

## **6.0 Results and Products/Deliverables**

### ***Results***

Results of this study will facilitate an understanding of the relative attractiveness and suitability of the Study Area for recreation, compared to other reservoir areas in northern California. Results will identify potential barriers to increased visitation to areas, and ways of addressing those barriers. Results will include specific recommendations for new facilities and programs, as well as special events.

### ***Products/Deliverables***

The following products will be developed for this study:

- Interim Report

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- Draft Final Report

Both reports will be produced and organized by market segment and target survey groups. Both will contain an executive summary; an introduction; objectives; methods; results; and a discussion.

## **7.0 Coordination and Implementation Strategy**

### ***Coordination with Other Resource Areas/Studies***

This study will require coordination with SP-R1—Public and Private Vehicular Access; SP-R4—Assess Relationship of Fish/Wildlife Management and Recreation; SP-R5—Assess Recreation Areas Management; SP-R7—Reservoir Boating Survey; SP-R8—Carrying Capacity; SP-R12—Projected Recreation Use; SP-R13—Recreation Surveys; SP-R17—Recreation Needs; and SP-R18—Recreation Activity, Spending, and Associated Economic Impacts.

### ***Issues, Concerns, Comments Tracking, and/or Regulatory Compliance Requirements***

This study addresses Issue Statement R1—adequacy of existing project recreation facilities, opportunities, and access to accommodate current use and future demand. It specifically addresses Issues RE 1, 2, 5-17, 19-39, 55, 56, 60, 64-83, 95, 96, 104, 105, 118-130, 132-145, 147, 150, and 151.

## **8.0 Study Schedule**

Data collection: July 2002 through June 2003.

Report writing and data analysis: July through October 2003.

Interim Report due: August 2003.

Draft Final Report due: November 2003.

## **9.0 References**

California Department of Parks and Recreation. March, 1998. Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California. Sacramento, CA.

Guthrie, R., D. A. Penland, and E. Seagle. 1997. Lake Oroville State Recreation Area Recreational Use Study. Contract report prepared for DWR, Chico State University, Chico, CA.

Jackson, W.F., G.N. Wallace, J.P. Titre, and J.J. Vogel. 1998. *A Study of Boater Recreation on Lake Berryessa, California*. Contract report prepared for US Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region.

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## **Attachment A**

### **Existing Information**

1. 1997 DPR Public Opinion on Outdoor Recreation in California
2. 2001 DPR Statewide Parks Survey (in developmental stage)
3. A Study of Boater Recreation on Lake Berryessa, CA
4. Poe Hydroelectric Project Recreation Studies
5. Upper North Fork Feather River Project Recreation Studies
6. Lake Oroville Attendance Figures
7. LOSRA Attendance Data Summaries (1995-2000)
8. LORA Recreation Plan
9. DPR and DWR Historical Recreation Plans (Bulletin 1176)
10. 1996 Chico State University Study by Guthrie et al. (1997)